

## Message Text

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14-11

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MC-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 PM-03 INR-07 L-02

ACDA-05 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 COME-00 EB-07 NSC-05 /070 W

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R 090937Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5858

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 2340

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, NL

SUBJ: LOCKHEED P-3 ORION SALE TO THE NETHERLANDS

REF: THE HAGUE 1644, USNATO 2044

1. DURING MAY MEETING WITH STATE SECRETARY STEMERDINK, DCM REFERRED TO FRG DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER'S VISIT TO THE HAGUE EARLIER IN THE WEEK AND ASKED IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY DISCUSSION OF THE PURCHASE OF REPLACEMENT RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT FOR THE NETHERLANDS AND FEDERAL REPUBLIC NAVIES. STEMERDINK REPLIED THAT THE SUBJECT HAD COME UP BRIEFLY AND THAT HE HAD TAKEN THE OCCASION TO ARGUE IN FAVOR OF THE TWO COUNTRIES SELECTING THE SAME AIRCRAFT. ACCORDING TO STEMERDINK, LEBER HAD INDICATED WHY THE FRG FAVORED THE SHORT RANGE S3 VIKING AND HAD SUGGESTED THAT STEMERDINK PURSUE THE SUBJECT WHEN HE SAW STATE SECRETARY MANN IN THE FIRST PART OF MAY.

2. STEMERDINK REITERATED HIS BELIEF THAT IT WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF NATO AS WELL AS THE NETHERLANDS AND THE FRG FOR THE TWO COUNTRIES TO BUY THE SAME REPLACEMENT RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT. HE  
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ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE GERMANS WERE TAKING THE POSITION THAT THEY DID NOT NEED A LONG-RANGE AIRCRAFT AND HENCE WERE ATTRACTED BY THE S3 WITH ITS SIGNIFICANT SAVINGS IN NUMBER CREW REQUIRED. STEMERDINK SAID, HOWEVER,

HE HAD STILL NOT GOTTEN AN ANSWER AS TO THE STRATEGIC BASIS FOR THE FRG DECISION TO SHIFT FROM THEIR PRESENT LONG-RANGE ATLANTQUES TO THE SHORT-RANGE VIKINGS. HE HAD HEARD THAT IT WAS DUE TO THE INFLUENCE OF SOME OF THE SENIOR NAVAL OFFICERS WHO AS FORMER JET PILOTS HAD A PREFERENCE FOR LIGHTER AIRCRAFT. STEMERDINK SAID HE INTENDED TO GO INTO THE GERMAN RATIONALE FURTHER WITH STATE SECRETARY MANN. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IN THE END THE NETHERLANDS AND THE FRG MIGHT WELL GO THEIR SEPARATE WAYS WITH THE FORMER BUYING THE ORION AND THE LATTER THE VIKING. HE MADE IT CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT AS FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED THE NETHERLANDS DECISION WAS NOT IMMINENT.

3. COMMENT: GIVEN STEMERDINK'S FONDNESS FOR THE ENIGMATIC STYLE IT IS OFTEN DIFFICULT TO KNOW WHAT HIS TRUE INTENTIONS ARE AND THIS IS ONE OF THOSE CASES. HE MAY BE GENUINELY PUZZLED BY THE GERMAN NAVY'S RATIONALE FOR SHIFTING FROM A LONG-RANGE TO A SHORT-RANGE RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT AND HE IS CURIOUS AS TO WHAT EXTENT IT HAS COORDINATED THIS DECISION WITH NATO. ALTERNATIVELY, STEMERDINK MAY BE USING THE GERMAN ANGLE SIMPLY AS A PLOY TO POSTPONE A DUTCH DECISION UNTIL AFTER THE GON HAS TAKEN THE POLITICALLY FAR MORE CRITICAL DECISION ON A REPLACEMENT FIGHTER FOR THE NETHERLANDS AIR FORCE. GOULD

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** MILITARY AIRCRAFT, MILITARY SALES  
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**Draft Date:** 09 MAY 1975  
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